

List of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of interpreting a pronoun ~~reference~~, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:
 - A) recognizing a user input as containing a recognized pronoun ~~reference~~;
 - ~~B) associating a historical listing of noun references with an associated pronoun preference;~~
 - ~~CB)~~ comparing said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to ~~at least one of said associated pronoun information associating the historical noun references with pronoun number and gender information; preferences; and~~
 - ~~DC)~~ selecting one of said historical noun references ~~of said historical listing as a function of said comparison between said recognized pronoun reference and at least one of said associated pronoun information preferences; and~~
 - D) updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of said historical noun reference.
2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein in ~~step BC~~), the selecting of one of said historical noun references ~~associated pronoun preference~~ is determined as a function of historical usage of a pronoun with respect to each of the noun references.
3. (Original) A method according to claim 2 wherein said historical usage includes maintaining a count of correct usage events of a given pronoun with respect to a given noun reference.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein in ~~step DC~~, said historical noun references ~~is~~ are selected based upon a match of said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ with at least one of said associated pronoun preferences.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein in ~~step CB~~, said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ is compared to at least one of said associated historical noun references ~~pronoun preferences~~ in order from most recent to least recent in said historical listing.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for interpreting a pronoun ~~reference~~ comprising:

a recognizer adapted ~~for to~~ recognizing a user input as containing a recognized pronoun ~~reference~~;

a historical listing of noun references ~~with an~~ and associated pronoun information associating the historical noun references with pronoun number and gender information ~~reference~~;

means for comparing a said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to ~~at least one of~~ said associated pronoun information; ~~preferences; and~~

means for selecting one of said noun references of said historical listing as a function of said comparison between said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ and ~~at least one of~~ said associated pronoun information ~~preferences~~; and

means for updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of one of said noun references.

7. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 6 further comprising means for determining an associated pronoun preference as a function of historical usage of a pronoun with respect to the noun reference.

8. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein said historical listing includes a count of correct usage events of a given pronoun with respect to a given noun reference.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said noun reference is selected based upon a match of said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ with ~~at least one of said associated pronoun preferences~~information.

10. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said means for comparing is configured to compare each recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to said pronoun information associated with said historical noun references ~~is compared to at least one of said associated pronoun preferences in~~ chronological order from most recent historical noun reference to least recent historical noun ~~of the noun's references in said historical listing.~~

11. (Currently Amended) A method of interpreting a pronoun ~~reference~~ in a voice user interface comprising ~~the steps of:~~

A) recognizing a user utterance as containing a recognized pronoun ~~reference~~;
B) ~~associating a historical listing of at least one noun reference with an associated pronoun preference;~~

~~CB)~~ comparing said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to ~~at least one of said associated pronoun~~ information associating the historical noun references with pronoun number and gender information; preferences; and

~~DC)~~ selecting a record from a database corresponding to one of said historical noun references ~~of said historical listing~~ as a function of said comparison between said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ and said at least one of said associated pronoun information; and preferences.

D) updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of said record.

12. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 wherein ~~in step BD), the record is associated selected pronoun preference is determined~~ as a function of historical usage of a pronoun with respect to each of the noun references.

13 (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 12 wherein said historical usage includes ~~maintaining~~ a count of correct usage events of a given pronoun with respect to a given noun reference.

14. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 wherein ~~step CB~~) includes comparing said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to said at least one of said associated pronoun information preferences in chronological order from most recent to least recent.

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 further comprising ~~the step of:~~

E) placing a telephone call to a telephone number in said selected record of said database.

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 further comprising ~~the step of:~~

~~EF~~) sending an electronic message to an address in said selected record of said database.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for interpreting a pronoun ~~reference~~ in a voice user interface comprising:

a recognizer adapted ~~for to~~ recognizing a user input as containing a recognized pronoun ~~reference~~;

a historical listing of ~~at least one noun references with an~~ and associated pronoun information associating the historical noun references with pronoun number and gender information ~~reference~~;

means for comparing ~~a said~~ recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to ~~at least one of~~ said associated-pronoun information; ~~preferences~~; and

means for selecting a record from a database corresponding to one of said historical noun references ~~of said historical listing~~ as a function of said comparison between said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ and ~~at least one of~~ said associated-pronoun information~~preferences~~; and

means for updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of said historical noun reference.

18. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 17 further comprising:

means for determining an associated pronoun preference as a function of historical usage of a pronoun with respect to ~~the~~ said noun reference.

19. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 18 wherein said historical usage includes a count of correct usage events of a given pronoun with respect to a given noun reference.

20. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 17 wherein said means for comparing is configured to compare each recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to said pronoun information associated with said historical noun references ~~is compared to at least one of said associated pronoun preferences~~ in chronological order from most recent historical noun reference to least recent historical noun reference.

21. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 17 further comprising:
means for placing a telephone call to a telephone number in said selected record
of said database.

22. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 17 further comprising:
means for sending an electronic message to an address in said selected record of said
database.

23. (Currently Amended) A method of establishing a pronoun ~~preference~~
information related to a noun identifier in a voice user interface database including a user,
the method comprising: ~~the steps of:~~

A) ~~establishing providing a at least one~~ pronoun ~~preference information~~
database field associated with a pronoun and in a pronoun database corresponding to a
reference noun identifier ~~in a reference database~~;

B) searching for historical information indicative of a use of said pronoun
related to said reference noun identifier ~~preference~~; and

C) assigning said pronoun ~~preference information~~ field a value designation
~~indicative of a first pronoun designation as a function of a response by the user.~~

24. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23 wherein ~~step B)~~
includes searching a database record corresponding to said reference noun identifier ~~in~~
~~said reference database~~.

25. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23 wherein ~~step-B~~) includes searching a plurality of database records, ~~in said reference database,~~ having a same or similar noun identifier as said reference noun identifier, for pronoun information ~~indicative of a pronoun preference.~~

26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23 wherein ~~step-A~~) includes ~~establishing~~ providing a masculine pronoun ~~preference~~ information field and a feminine pronoun ~~preference~~ information field.

28. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 27 wherein said masculine pronoun ~~preference~~ information field is "him" and said feminine pronoun ~~preference~~ information field is "her."

29. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23 wherein ~~step-A~~) includes ~~establishing~~ providing a singular pronoun ~~preference~~ information field and a plural pronoun information ~~preference~~ field.

30. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29 wherein said singular pronoun ~~preference~~ information field is "it" and said plural pronoun ~~preference~~ information field is "them."

31. (Currently Amended) A system for establishing a pronoun preference for ~~to~~ a noun identifier in a database including a pronoun preference field, the system in a ~~database~~ comprising:

a pronoun ~~preference~~ information database including at least one pronoun information ~~preference~~ field corresponding to a reference noun identifier in a ~~reference~~ said database;

means for searching said pronoun information database for historical information including number and gender information associated with the noun identifier, the historical information being indicative of a pronoun preference, the means for searching returns a pronoun preference result as a function of said search of said pronoun information database; and

means for assigning said pronoun preference field a ~~designation indicative of a~~ first pronoun designation value indicative of said pronoun preference result.

32. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 further comprising means for searching a record corresponding to said reference noun identifier in said ~~reference~~ database.

33. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 further comprising means for searching a plurality of records, in said ~~reference~~ database, having a same or similar noun identifier as said reference noun identifier for pronoun information indicative of a pronoun preference.

34. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 further comprising means for searching a plurality of records, in a default pronoun designation database, having a same or similar noun identifier as said reference noun identifier for pronoun information ~~indicative of a pronoun preference~~.

35. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 wherein said pronoun ~~preference~~ information database includes a masculine pronoun ~~preference~~ information field and a feminine pronoun ~~preference~~ information field.

36. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim ~~34~~35 wherein said masculine pronoun ~~preference~~ information field is "him" and said feminine pronoun ~~preference~~ information field is "her."

37. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 wherein said pronoun ~~reference~~ database includes a singular pronoun ~~preference~~ information field and a plural pronoun ~~preference~~ information field.

38. (Currently amended) A system according to claim ~~34~~37 wherein said singular pronoun ~~preference~~ information field is "it" and said plural pronoun ~~preference~~ information field is "them."

39. (Currently Amended) A system providing for user interaction comprising:

a voice personal assistant adapted to presenting prompts to and receiving responses from a user;

said voice personal assistant including a recognizer adapted for recognizing responses that include pronouns, received from the user;

means for maintaining a historical list of noun references;

~~means for associating at least one associated pronoun preference with at least one noun reference in said historical list;~~

means for comparing a recognized pronoun to ~~with at least one of said associated~~ pronoun information associated with historical noun references, the pronoun information including pronoun number and gender information;

an application adapted for performing at least one function for said user;

means for selecting one of said historical noun references ~~of said historical listing~~ as a function of a comparison between a recognized pronoun with ~~at least one of said associated pronoun~~ information preferences; and

utilizing a selected one of said noun references in performing a function of said application; and

means for updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of said historical noun reference.

40. (Currently Amended) A system providing for user interaction comprising:

a voice personal assistant adapted to presenting prompts to and receiving responses from a user;

said voice personal assistant including a recognizer adapted for recognizing responses that include pronouns, received from the user;

a historical list of noun references;

a pronoun cross-reference associating ~~at least one associated pronoun~~ information ~~reference~~ with at least one noun reference in said historical list the pronoun information including pronoun number and gender information;

a first subsystem adapted for selecting one of said noun references of said historical listing as a function of a comparison between a recognized pronoun with ~~at least one of said associated pronoun~~ information ~~preferences~~ in said pronoun cross-reference;

an application adapted for performing at least one function for said user; ~~and~~ utilizing a selected one of said noun references in performing a function of said application; and

a second subsystem configured to update said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of said historical noun reference.

41. (New) The method of claim 23 wherein the response is a user utterance.